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LORENZ ON LEADERSHIP: PART 3

Gen Stephen Lorenz hit a home run with his article "Lorenz on Leadership: Part 3" (Fall 2010). Although he may be the last person to seek the next day's news headline, you can be sure that the whole team was at home plate congratulating him for his performance. Like baseball players, Air Force personnel have diverse positions and talents but must operate as a team to be effective. The General Lorenzes of our Air Force inspire and foster something that transcends our individual greatness. Each of the "Lorenz on Leadership" articles cuts to the reality of leadership principles and helps me personally identify with fundamental ideas that ultimately deal with challenging and inspiring people. As a commander, I have tried to apply some of these ideas by establishing individual and team-development plans for our squadron's enlisted, officer, and civilian personnel. We call the program "Project Lorenz" because these plans reflect the principles and common sense that he promotes. Once again, thank you, General Lorenz, for your service and dedication to the Air Force and its most important resource—Airmen.

Lt Col Patrick A. Brown, USAF
Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio

COLOMBIA CAN TEACH AFGHANISTAN (AND THE UNITED STATES) HOW TO WIN

In response to Robert Haddick's article "Colombia Can Teach Afghanistan (and the United States) How to Win" (Summer 2010), I contend that US support to nations engaged in counterinsurgency is really about establishing a durable social equilibrium. Preoccupation with the term *win* colors far too many articles purporting to have a solution for such complex problems.

We entered the small war in Colombia early enough to realize large leverage from a small investment; however, we haven't brought closure to the large war (politically if not militarily) in Afghanistan. Although Mr. Haddick's proposal may provide enough social equilibrium for us to withdraw from Afghanistan, doing so may undermine our national interest in a strong central Afghan government. Would that outcome amount to "winning" after eight years? I would simply characterize it as being practical.

Rick Bennett
Joint Warfighting Center, Suffolk, Virginia

I've worked with Latin American military forces, and they are always eager to learn from our operations. I believe it is equally important for us to learn from them. Articles like Robert Haddick's can have a great impact on our strategy if we read them at the appropriate level. I feel that for many years the US Air Force has neglected Latin American relations, so it's time to begin looking at how we can improve operations, and eventually democracy, in places closer to home.

Capt Pedro E. Gonzalez, USAF
Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona

I read Mr. Haddick's article with great interest, but I cannot help noticing the differences between Colombia and Afghanistan. On the one hand, Colombia is a democracy, and the people feel that they are a nation. On the other hand, there is no central power in Afghanistan; the leadership is more tribal than central; and the tribes possess autonomy and aspirations that have nothing to do with the central government. This situation translates into the fact that the power of the Afghan government is limited to a few cities. In the rest of the country, alliances change constantly. We also have to consider that in Colombia, despite everything, the people have a Western way



of thinking, but in Afghanistan their way of thinking is very different from our Western idiosyncrasies. Unfortunately, the situation will continue to deteriorate slowly as US and North Atlantic Treaty Organization forces leave the country, as was the case when the Soviets left.

Marcos Daniel Funes
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Editor's Note: Mr. Funes read the Spanish version of this article, available at <http://www.airpower.maxwell.af.mil/apjinternational/apj-s/2010/1tri10/haddick.html>.

COLOMBIA CAN TEACH AFGHANISTAN (AND THE UNITED STATES) HOW TO WIN: THE AUTHOR RESPONDS

Mr. Funes points out some notable differences between Colombia and Afghanistan. I agree that significant cultural and historical differences exist between the two countries, a fact that I mentioned in my article. We should also take note of the similarities between the two insurgencies, which I also discussed.

Mr. Funes points out the more tribal and decentralized nature of Afghan society. I believe that these characteristics support the argument for employing a Colombia-type approach to counterinsurgency in Afghanistan. Colombia's home-guard platoon program, which seems appropriate for a decentralized Afghanistan, is now increasingly popular with the staff of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Afghanistan's apparent cultural resistance to a strong central government argues against the ISAF's current plan to establish a large general-purpose national army and national police force. Better to follow Colombia's example again and build a smaller—but elite and specialized—helicopter-mobile army.

Finally, we should recall how chaotic Colombia was in the 1990s. Despite ongoing security challenges, that country has improved considerably since those dark days, demonstrating that wise policies and good

leadership can make a difference—hopefully, even in Afghanistan.

Robert Haddick
Bethesda, Maryland

LEADING AND MANAGING THROUGH INFLUENCE: CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES

Dr. Raymond Shulstad and Lt Col Richard Mael's article "Leading and Managing through Influence: Challenges and Responses" (Summer 2010) has significant value for executive officers and others serving in similar jobs. Having twice served as an executive officer, I can attest that almost every day I faced challenges similar to those described in the article.

An executive officer for a wing or group commander has no direct authority over unit commanders, nor does he or she really speak for the wing or group commander. Nevertheless, every day the executive officer either assists in synchronizing projects across the wing or group or helps unit commanders and their appointed project officers and senior noncommissioned officers stay "on track" with myriad administrative and operational tasks.

In my opinion, the main job of any group or wing commander is to set the mission, vision, and goals for the organization; maintain situational awareness by strategically monitoring the internal and external environments; secure resources to support the existing mission; obtain additional resources for new missions; and, most importantly, push back against unnecessary taskings. To attain those objectives, effective executive officers can follow the advice of Dr. Shulstad and Lieutenant Colonel Mael by (1) obtaining commitment, (2) taking charge, (3) securing cooperation, (4) opening and maintaining lines of communication, (5) building trust and respect, (6) removing barriers, and (7) building and executing plans.

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